Paul and Callie Miller: Fairview Community History Project

Interviewers: Tealey Ellis and Judith Robertson
Interviewees: Paul and Callie Miller at their home on Old Fort Road in Fairview
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[Tealey and Judith went over disclaimer, description, permissions]

Tealey Ellis: The questions I'm going to be asking today are mainly of your memories of living in Fairview. I believe you said it was 1967 when you moved here?

Paul Miller: Yes--

Callie Miller: --In this particular house. We've both been in Fairview all our lives.

PM: Ladies first—

CM: --I need to turn the light on-

PM: You can't see to talk?

CM: No I can't see to talk.

TE: So where were you born Mrs. Miller?

CM: 'Course back then everybody was borned at home. You didn't go to the hospital to have a baby. I was born on Garren Creek.

TE: Okay. What about you sir?

PM: I was born straight in front of the Fairview School.

CM: The house is still there.

PM: House is still there. First house below the Food Lion. That's where I was born and Doctor McCracken lived down below and he delivered me. My cradle was a dresser drawer.

TE: Oh I like that. [laughing]

TE: What about…did a doctor come to the house when you were born? Or a midwife? Or just… born? [more laughter]

CM: I don't know if they had a midwife. Maybe some member in the family. I don't remember Mama saying.

TE: You mentioned the house that was right across from the school that's still there. Is that the one that's…here's the Food Lion and then there's a couple of buildings and then there's a house right down there on the right. Is that the house?

PM: That was my first house. Right above that block.

TE: Okay, I'll look at that house differently now every time that I see it. That's fantastic.

PM: Our daughter owns it now.

TE: Okay. What were your parent's names?

PM: My daddy was Jesse Paul Miller. My mother was Thelma Lytle Miller. I'm a half Lytle.

CM: Yeah we're kissing cousins.

TE: …best kind.

PM: We're one half fifteenth cousins. [lots of laughter]

TE: Got it all figured out haven't you?

PM: And the computer says that we are third cousins five times removed.

TE: That'll work. [laughter]

Judith Robertson: It's well diluted.

TE: What about your parents? Their names?

CM: My dad's name was Robert Lee Lytle and my mother's name was Catherine Nesbitt. She didn't have a middle name.

TE: Mrs. Miller where were your parents born? Were they born in Fairview?

CM: They were.

TE: Still that Garren Creek area?

CM: Uh huh.

TE: And Mr. Miller, where were your parents born?

PM: They lived in Fairview. I'm sure they was born in Fairview. My mother, right above Food Lion was the house where she was raised at. It's gone now. I don't know where my dad's people lived when he was born. 'Cause they built that house in 1927. He was born in 1912.

TE: Okay. What kind of work did your parents do?

PM: 'Til the war my dad and mother both worked at the Beacon and then after the war she went back to Beacon and daddy went to work in the plumbing shop in town.

TE: What about you Mrs. Miller?

CM: My dad did sheet metal work but he worked during the war at Moore General Hospital. But because of an illness…back then they didn't know very much but he had a growth come up in his mouth and it kept coming up, you know, and they'd cut it off and it'd come back. And so they came out with radiation, and they decided "put radiation on it," it'd kill it. Well, they didn't know enough to know how to manage it. And they burned up his mouth real bad. He always had a problem eating after all that, afterwards. And so several years he was unable to work. In fact we didn't know if he was going to live or not. And I look back and wonder, how did we make it? You know women didn't have jobs back then.

TE: No normally they didn't. Not outside the home anyway.

CM: You didn't have food stamps. I had a five year older brother and between the two of us and my mother, we made a garden and that's how we survived.

TE: Made your own food?

CM: Yep.

TE: Had to to survive. You mentioned Moore Hospital?

CM: Moore General Hospital.

TE: Where...I'm not from this area so where was that?

CM: It's in Swannanoa wasn't it Paul?

PM: Across the road from Owen High School. Turned up Lake Eden Road and right beside it.

CM: But after he went through this illness and everything, he didn't go back there. He went to work at a sheet metal shop where they did heating and air conditioning and that kind of thing. And he became pretty good at doing that work.

TE: Good for him.

CM: In fact he didn't retire until he was seventy-four and they begged him to stay on. Just stay in the shop and make routine parts that you know, you use every day, type-of-thing.

TE: He must've been really good.

CM: We thought he was. I did. [laughter]

TE: He was your daddy, of course (you did.)

TE: Mr. Miller, did your family do any farming in addition to the other jobs?

PM: They had a big garden and had corn growing two or three different places. They had milk cows and horses. Raised corn to feed them and the pigs. We'd grind it up into cornmeal too.

TM: Did either of your families do any canning in the summer?

Both: Yes.

CM: That's the only way you survived.

PM: Canned everything.

CM: And eventually when freezers…you know, we got power. You know we didn't have electricity at my house until I was probably a junior or senior in high school.

TE: (There are) a lot of people today, thinking living off the grid is a new invention. Some of us lived off the grid a long time ago didn't we?

CM: We didn't have plumbing in the house 'til about that time too.

TE: Mr. Miller you mentioned the house where your parents lived when you were born. Do you know when that house was built?

PM: In 1927.

TE: Do you have any photographs of the house?

PM: Somewhere, but I don't know where. We'd have to hunt 'em.

TE: That's okay. Did either of your families ever hire any people from the community to help out with the crops?

PM: No, we didn't have that much. That house really belonged to my grandfather. We didn't live there 'til the war started and my dad went to Newport News, Virginia. We moved in with my grandparents in 1941 I guess and then we went to Virginia and lived two years. Came back and they worked on the house and made an upstairs house and a downstairs house. And we lived upstairs. 'Til my grandparents got old and died and then my dad bought his brothers and sisters part of the house and they stayed on there.

TE: What was your grandfather's name?

PM: Called him W.L. Miller, but William Lawrence was his name.

TE: What do either of you recall in your early years of Fairview, what it was like as a young person growing up in Fairview?

PM: Well, there wasn't a lot to do. But we had a good time anyway.

CM: We didn't know we was poor. Nobody told us. [laughter]

TE: What kinds of activities? Were they church-related activities or…

Both: Yeah…

CM: …lot of it was.

PM: 'Bout the only thing going in Fairview was baseball. And basketball. And any kind of sports. If you wanted to go to the movie you had to go to town. A friend of mine, Clark Sayles, we used to hitchhike to town on a Sunday afternoon. Sometimes it'd be thirty minutes before a car would come by. So sometimes we'd get tired going towards town. We'd go to the other side of the road and catch a ride back. Then we'd go down to Guy Merrell's store and start again. I have walked all the way from Asheville to home on a Sunday night because a car didn't come by.

TE: How long did that take?

PM: I don't know.

CM: Time wasn't of the essence back then. [more laughter]

TE: What was high school like in Fairview? Was it Reynolds then?

PM: The building?

TE: Well, the building or the name of the school.

PM: It was Fairview High School. In a big, two-story brick building. And a big wood building up back behind it had classrooms and a gym in it. There was another one they called the "soup house" (in the summertime they'd help people can stuff) and it had a cafeteria in it and two classrooms. It's all gone now.

CM: Now he went there all the time. I went there eleven years and then I was the first class to go to A.C. Reynolds. I was the first graduating class at Reynolds.

TE: And that was what year?

CM: In 1956. We still meet once a year.

TE: That's wonderful. Was there a bus?

CM: Oh yeah.

TE: You had mentioned, Mr. Miller, where the old Fairview High School was located. Is the gym you're talking about the Community Center now?

CM: No, it's gone. It's the same location. The "soup house" was right where the gym (the old gym) is now and behind it was a big, white building that had the gymnasium and some classrooms in it. And where the school building is now it was a big two-story building.

TE: Okay. What do you recall as a teenager or a young adult? Was there a sense of community in Fairview? People helping each other? What are your memories of that?

PM: I don't remember too much about anything like that really. I guess it was. You didn't have to lock your doors I know that.

CM: Nobody thought about locking their doors.

PM: We didn't have keys to doors.

TE: It's a little different now. Things have changed.

PM: Didn't have locks.

TE: What are some of the biggest changes you've seen?

PM: The Food Lion was one of the biggest ones. The four lane road. It took an hour to get home from town before they made the four lane.

TE: Do you think the expansion of the highway, making it four lanes, had any kind of impact?

PM: Well, a lot of people moved out here since then. I don't know if the road was the cause of it or not. There's a lot of people moved.

TE: Well it's a beautiful place.

PM: When I was in high school I knew just about where everybody lived. And names.

CM: It's all family, you know. An example of that. I dated--Jeff Sullins was a local highway patrolman in this area--I dated his son. I lived in Garren Creek and he lived in Oakley, and his dad said "Son. You can find a girl closer than that." [laughter]

CM: Well, the beauty of the story is, when he retired they moved right at the end of the road.

TE: For heaven's sakes.

CM: I wanted to knock on the door all those years before he died and say, "It looks like you couldn't have found a place closer into town." [more laughter]

TE: You should have. As you grew out of those teenage years and into young adulthood, and later family, what kind of community celebrations do you recall? Any at holiday times?

Both: Not much.

CM: I think all the churches had a homecoming but… [both talking]

CM: And I think one of the biggest changes I see is people don't go to church like they used to. You don't have the camaraderie of church like you did when we were coming up.

TE: Were you at church every Sunday?

PM: Pretty much.

CM: Still are. People have changed.

TE: It was a place to go and it's what you did. And probably catch up on some things as well. I was looking at your form that you completed here a while ago and I noticed, Callie-Miss Miller, that you were involved in the postal service?

CM: I started out just here locally at the local Fairview post office.

TE: Where was it?

CM: At the time it was where the Hot Dog King is. That was the first post office.

PM: That you worked at.

CM: Yeah, that I worked at. Then it moved down across from the—

PM:—Fire Department.

CM: --Fire Department. Then it moved where that beer joint is, what's that place called now?

TE: Brewskies.

CM: Okay. It moved there, and then from there it moved up to the shopping center. So I was in all of those.

TE: When you worked at the location where Hot Dog King is now, how many employees do you recall?

CM: There's just three.

TE: Interesting.

CM: And we hired some--back then they would use like college or high school students to help out at Christmas time and vacations. We'd call them "ninety-day wonders." They got an appointment for ninety days.

TE: So no postal tests had to be taken like I think there is today?

CM: Oh there's always been a post office test. I had to pass one. And back then I think it took two days to take it. I was working at C.P. Clare and the lady that was running the post office needed someone to take the test and I thought, 'well, I ain't got nothing to do.' [laughter]

CM: I wasn't serious about it. I just went and took it.

TE: And you ended up 36 years here.

CM: I started out--I was still working at C.P. Clare, but I'd go in every morning and put the mail up. You know when you're younger you can do things faster, and I got paid for two hours. And a lot of times it wouldn't take me more than an hour and I'd have time to run back home or go to work early or whatever you know.

TE: You had some extra time.

CM: Yeah.

TE: Mr. Miller, you said---

Judith Robertson: Wait. Her career continues.

CM: Huh?

JR: Your career continues.

CM: Oh yeah, then I went after Fairview and let's see I went to---

PM: You went to Asheville.

CM: They wanted me to come out there and help out, just help out in the finance office. So I did that for several years.

TE: Is that what you indicated here, clerk in an office?

CM: No. That was after. And then I went in to Asheville and got a job as a personnel assistant.

TE: Where was that?

CM: In Asheville.

TE: Yes, but where—

CM: It was in Brevard Road---

PM: I thought it was up in the federal building.

CM: No, it was in Brevard Road when I went. I started out part time in the finance office when it was up there at Post Novus (?) street.

TE: What was the name of business?

CM: United States Postal Service.

TE: I'm sorry, a little dense today.

CM: Yeah. I worked up there you know, with the courthouse and everything upstairs, and we were downstairs. The post office was downstairs. You're not from around here so I understand. Then it went from there, it moved out on Brevard Road where the general mail facility and all the mail was worked out there. Then I worked out there in personnel and finance.

TE: When did you retire?

CM: 2000.

PM: Well, you went to Skyland before you retired.

CM: I went to Skyland in '91 I guess 'cause I worked nine years at Skyland.

TE: What position did you have in Asheville?

JR: Yeah tell us what position you--

CM: -- I was postmaster out there. They called me "Superintendent and Support" and my duties were finance and personnel. So I had to do with the hiring, firing, retiring, safety, driving license. My department was responsible for a little bit of everything. One Christmas I spent the whole Christmas just about trying to keep the telephone going. They were not…it was diversified. The ones that fixed the phones were not the ones that installed the phones. So you know you had that to deal with.

TE: Right.

CM: I was very fortunate in that I had a good man that could tell me what was wrong. And he was right. He knew the system well enough.

TE: Right. That's good.

CM: And we'd have the phone company come in and say 'well you're going to have to do so and so." And I'd say "Very good, but, if it's your fault, you pay, if it's my fault I pay." And it straightened them out pretty quick.

TE: I'm sure it did.

JR: Phones used to be a lot touchier than they are now. Line service.

TE: Did you say that you had been postmaster at Skyland and you were there nine years?

CM: Mm hmm.

TE: Mr. Miller—

JR: --And then you got crazy after you retired. [laughter]

TE: What did you do when you went crazy? Or should I ask?

CM: Well, we put vinyl siding on the garages, and did a lot of chores around here…

TE: Got caught up on some things.

EM: Lot of things that needed doing. That winter I worked jigsaw puzzles 'til if I looked out the window it looked like a jigsaw puzzle. [laughter]

TE: Something's got to change.

CM: Something's got to change. So I called the girl that was running the office for Asheville Gastro and said, "You don't got a job out there working a day or two to get me out of the house?" I said "I'll do anything. I'll clean toilets if you want me to. I got to get out of the house." So I went out there and said "What do you want me to do?" And they said, "Whatever you want to do." I said, "That sounds good, but tell me…" Computers and all that was coming and we had to get everything in computers, so basically that's what I done. I put stuff into computers.

TE: Are you still working today--

CM: --No. I wish.

TE: --Outside the home.

CM: I started to go back to work. In fact, got a job down here at the Food Lion. But I figured it was just a little much, for my age. And then I can't…I had to have cataract surgery and then I had to have corneas transplant, and it affected your vision at night. You know most every job you have they want you to come in a night and I just couldn't do it.

TE: Well that's a good reason.

CM: I just had to back off.

TE: Mr. Miller, what was your occupation? What were you doing while your wife was all over the county?

PM: I was working at Price Piping Company for thirty-six years. When I got out of high school, I worked out at Beacon about four or five months. And then---

JR: --That's Beacon Manufacturing in—

Both: Swannanoa.

JR: --They made blankets.

PM: And then I went to Savannah River Project down in South Carolina and worked about a year.

JR: And what did they do there?

PM: A government thing. They made…atomic bombs is what they was going to do, I think. I don't really know what they did, they didn't tell. And then I was in the Army for two years. When I got out-worked at Price Piping Company that was in '58 and I worked there 'til 1994 and I got colon cancer and never did work anymore. I said, "Well, she can work now."

JR: Is Price Piping still in business?

PM: No. They were down in Biltmore.

CM: Back then they did a lot of commercial heating and air conditioning on…colleges, AB Tech, UNCA, Mission Hospital, Saint Josephs.

JR: Were you a designer or supervisor or did you do the actual work?

PM: Did the actual work and ended up being supervisor and part owner in the company.

TE: That's nice

PM: Started to say everybody else in the company is dead but…

CM: Back then they didn't depend as much on the college education as they did like through the Unions, as they had apprenticeship programs, and he even taught apprenticeship programs for a while.

PM: And then if you went through the apprenticeship programs five years, if you applied for a job with the state that apprenticeship counted the same as five years of college, all the points they'd give you going to work for the state.

TE: Very good. Things have changed, haven't they?

PM: I guess.

CM: I think a lot of it would be a lot would be better if they had the experience like the apprenticeship program. First it's book work. I mean it's good to have the book knowledge but it's a whole lot different from actually doing the work.

TE: That's very true. What are the stores for shopping here in Fairview that you remember when you were younger?

PM: There was one right at the corner of Brush Creek and the 74 highway but I don't remember the name of it. Next building down there was Woods (?) I don't know what the name was. It was Woods Store they called it and they mostly sold beer, and then there was Guy Merrell's store was next up the line and down the line you come up to the school and Paul Nesbitt had a store right beside the school in that rock building.

TE: What was it called?

PM: It was Paul Nesbitt, I guess it was Nesbitt's Grocery maybe. Then he got killed and Walter Sayles and Arthur Allison ran it for years. And then coming on up the road was Hamilton's store was over there - what's the name of that development?

CM: Not Windsong is it?

PM: Almost straight across the road from that first rock place, across the road from where that daycare center is. Then there was one at the corner of Old Fort Rd and 74.

TE: Any clothing stores?

CM: Just groceries, type of thing. Jot 'em downs we used to call them.

TE: Jot 'em downs, I like that. [laughter]

PM: There's one right down here, Oliver Sheets had a store. That's where you had to come and meet the bookmobile. When I was in high school I would ride my bicycle up there and meet them.

TE: How often did the bookmobile come around?

PM: I guess once a month, but it seemed like every week, but I don't believe it was every week. It could've been. I don't remember. I just remember coming up and meeting it. It'd be more than a week 'cause I'd get half a dozen books every time. I think that's all they'd let you have.

TE: Probably. When you mentioned bookmobile it took my mind back to school again. Were either of you involved in any sports?

PM: I played football for two years. That's all they had it, started when I was in the eleventh grade.

CM: I was a cheerleader.

TE: Do you have any pictures of your cheerleading days?

CM: Just what was in annuals and that kind of thing.

PM: That annual will have a picture of that gym in it.

CM: Do they have pictures like that out there?

TE: We have pictures of various things and this Monday the 30th there's gonna be another scan day at the library here in Fairview for people in the community that have pictures of any kind that they'd like to have scanned into the system. So if you find anything or remember anything, all you have to do is come to the library next Monday from 10-2 and we'll be set up down there and there will be people there to do the scanning for you. Feel free to come on down.

CM: I looked through my photo book and there was a copy of his mother and my mother's graduating class of, 1931 wasn't it?

TE: I don't think so I---

JR: And they really love annuals and you have the teams and the individuals and the teachers. They would probably love to have that annual scanned. You don't have to get it now but take it to the library if you would.

TE Because your football pictures would be in there too.

PM: We've got two or three annuals, one from my sister.

JR: They have a high speed high definition

machine that they bring in especially for this event and a trained staff.

TE: There are a few annuals here.

JR: They would probably love to have those.

PM: You could donate one, we have three. [more about the Pack Library and the process, pages being flipped through]

TE: What kind of record did your football team have during those two years?

PM: I don't know how many losses but we had two wins. We beat Swannanoa the first year and we beat Woodfin the second year.

TE: Who was your coach?

PM: Chick Martin.

CM: We have an old inn, we have (a drawing of the Inn) in Fairview. One of his classmates drew that. Fairview Inn.

TE: Where was this Fairview Inn?

PM: Right there where you turn up Garren Creek.

CM: Garren Creek on the right…

TE: Okay. And you owned it?

CM: No, uh uh.

TE: I'm sure they would love to have, to be able to scan that.

JR: Do you think you can get those things down to the library?

TE: I'll be over there and take you over there. I've never heard anyone speak of the Fairview Inn, that's exciting.

JR: You won't forget where that picture is?

CM: Probably don't want to waste time on looking now. I thought we'd have better pictures in the annual than we do.

JR: These are in really good condition too. Oh my goodness what a fabulous story.

TE: Was there different stores in Fairview? I assume you went into Asheville?

Both: Yes.

CM: I worked at S. H. Crest and Company, first job, first public job I ever had. I helped on my uncle's farm. He planted gladiolas for the Farmers Federation, grew them and cut them. Sorted them over winter and planted again the next year. Twenty-five cents an hour, I got. I used to say I'm never gonna plant another gladiola. [laughter] I like dahlias now.

TE: What clothing stores were in town?

CM: Sears.

PM: I always went to the Army Store.

TE: What about in Fairview, was there a barber shop, a hair salon?

PM: Not then. We'd go to Oakley. Tom Plumber had one in Oakley and that's where I always when. But somebody had a...

The first beauty shop that I remember in Fairview was up there next to

CM: …Geneva Spivey. Maybe? [low talking between Paul and Callie] ..Woman graduated either died or… that owned the rest home; it was up there next to where they have the trailer park…]

TE: How often--

CM: ---Novella Dalton had a beauty shop.

TE: How often did you all go into town as teenagers or as a families?

CM: Not very much.

PM: My grandmother sold eggs and butter to a store that's across the road from Saint Joe's Hospital. They'd go uptown and I'd go to a movie.

CM: He's from the well-to-do

PM: I think movies was six cents maybe.

TE: Movie was six cents. Did you buy a drink or popcorn? I don't remember. Not when I was little, might have. I think it was a quarter when I was in high school and we'd buy popcorn, a drink, and a candy bar. We didn't spend more than fifty cents.

TE: What about restaurants here in Fairview?

PM: First one I remember was Preston Grant and them built one where Angelo's is now.

CM: That was just a little small one up there where Angelo's is now.

PM: The Hook and Worm was up there where the coffee shop is now.

CM: Mostly a beer joint.

TE: Was it a bait shop, I hope?

CM: Just their names

TE: You mentioned earlier a doctor delivered you and his office was here in Fairview?

PM: You know first house was where we lived and there's a small house below that was the doctor's office near the road. When he died they moved it back and started renting. His youngest son lives there now. I don't remember his name. His son lives in Arden and he was a doctor, had one son in Clayton and he was a dentist.

JR: What was the doctor's name?

PM: McCracken. Julian.

TE: The doctor w---

CM: Julian is his son.

TE: Is this the house where the donkey is in the front yard?

Both: The one closest to Fairview. Green Roof.

TE: Do you recall any serious floods, any fires, any kind of accidents, traumatic events happening in Fairview as teen or young adult at any point?

CM: Was it 1916 Daddy talked about it flooded so?

PM: It was before he was born. There was 1940. Didn't flood much in Fairview but Swannanoa River was flooded - we sat on (the) side of hill and watched the water flow.

TE: Any event you remember?

CM: I had to have surgery when I was just…what'd Daddy say? When I was two or three years old?

PM: Three or four, something like that.

CM: I had messed up my ear. There was no doctors around here that could do anything like that. He took me to Old Fort to a doctor down there who sent me to Asheville to have surgery. He said, "She's got to have surgery now or she's not gonna make it." 'Course daddy didn't have money, you know, back then they didn't have money. They did the surgery and he just paid them along as he could, until he got it paid for.

TE: That was very good. Do you know of, along that same line, either of you where people might have bartered a service; a medical service or dental service? Like, "I'll supply you with sweet potatoes…" You know anything like that?

PM: I know people did that with Dr. McCracken but I don't know who.

CM: One of the things my mamma done was hook rugs, punch rugs, and she made rugs to pay for mine and my brother's dental bills, to a dentist up in Black Mountain.

TE: Do either of you, in your high school, remember integration? Were there any other ethnic groups besides white?

CM: We had one family here. But we treated them just like they was us, like family. Mostly. Gideons.

PM: They were half. Half.

CM: They were treated…people here in Fairview treated them like they were us, a part of us. And I don't remember anything (about integration) that came up. The only funny thing that came up in my mind when you said that was in high school. You know how kids will put their heads down on their desk? You'd be about half asleep?

TE: Yes.

CM: Ned's talking, and he was talking about that. And Tommy Ray said "''Fore long it'll just be cream-colored. It won't be white or black, it'll be cream-colored."

PM: That was at Reynolds.

TE: And that was a young boy in class who said that?

CM: Yeah.

TE: What about during war times? What was the sentiment, the thoughts and feelings of people around Fairview? In terms of what they thought about the wars, and should we be there, shouldn't we be there?

PM: I don't remember about the second world war. Vietnam was the main thing, and Korea both. They said we shouldn't be there. Most people didn't think we should be there. They went anyway.

CM: They didn't refuse to go though.

PM: You got drafted and went. I got drafted but it was right after Korea before Vietnam, so I was a peacetime soldier.

TE: Were there any times maybe during the war, were there any demonstrations here in Fairview or Asheville?

PM: I don't remember any. Wasn't any in Fairview.

CM: Never in Fairview. That I know of. Even to this day I don't know of any rebellion.

TE: Is there anything that I haven't asked? Or any topic that you would like to share? A special memory or anything that we haven't asked?

PM: Can't think of anything.

CM: I think our teachers were really dedicated to helping kids. Back then, they didn't have as much help as they do now. I would've loved to went to college but I didn't have that opportunity. My parents just could not have sent me to college. Daddy had just got over being sick and just started to work again and we didn't have anything. But years later I found out about Berea College where you could work. You know, if somebody had just told me, maybe I could've found a way to go there. And I could've stayed 'til I got out. But you didn't know about it so you couldn't do it.

TE: Berea College is a wonderful place. [Callie agreeing in background] Still going on. That's for sure. But it seems like you've done very well for yourself though in spite of not being able to go to college. Give yourself a pat on the back too, for all of the accomplishments you've made. Do you have any questions Judith? Thank you, I'd forgotten to ask that. In all your time living in Fairview, do either of you have a special character, someone in the community that was funny, different, unusual? Like someone that liked to tell stories? My grandfather was a storyteller so I was wondering, you know, maybe Fairview had one of those.

PM: I don't remember any. Garnis McBrayer, people really liked to visit with him. That man that drew Gasoline Alley

CM: --lived down here on Ballard's Creek. He used to draw Gasoline Alley and he came on in to the post office and he told me one day, he said, "I've been around the world and you want me to tell you what I really think is the best thing that can happen to anybody?" I said, "Okay." He said, "Go to Garnis McBrayer's place and sit down in front of his fireplace and just listen to him tell tales." [laughter]

TE: Where did he live?

CM: Garnis lived up the road—

PM: About mile and half up.

JR: Is he still alive?

PM: No, uh uh.

TE: Does he have family around that you're aware of? Any names that you can remember?

PM: Gary Watkins is married to his daughter Elaine.

CM: Elaine Watkins. And I think Teresa lives there in the house.

PM: In Garnis's house.

CM: In Garnis's house. I don't know what her last name is now.

TE: Elaine Watkins?

CM: That's what she is now.

TE: Okay, and her sister's name? What'd I say?

JR: Elaine.

TE: Okay, I have her down as Elaine Watkins but that--

PM: --Teresa.

TE: The other one was Teresa. Okay. I'm going to check into Elaine Watkins and see if we can't track her down. Do you know how to get in touch with her?

CM: I can look her phone number up and give it to you. I've got an old phone book, I'll look up those numbers. Most people are like me, they've kept their house number. Most people my age have.

TE: Okay. She might be able to—

CM: --Tell you some more stuff about him.

TE: Yeah, tell more stories about him, that'd be great, as the storyteller of Fairview. That'd be wonderful.

CM: And he was good at making sausage. Paul used to like his sausage.

TE: Oh really?

PM: He'd go to town and buy a hog and grind it up into sausage and sell it. And he was good at it.

CM: Nobody couldn't do it after he was gone. It was gone.

PM: Well, Obie Sheets had a store down here. He did same thing and then he died. Then his son-in-law tried it but he didn't do much good at it.

JR: How long have you lived in this house?

PM: Right here we moved in July of 1967. It was right beside that door and over to here.

CM: We had two rooms, two bedrooms, a bath, kitchen and living room.

JR: Did you have power? And plumbing?

Both: Yeah, uh huh.

PM: Then in '71 we added that part on and then nine to ten years ago we built this, had it put on.

JR: We have all these outbuildings, hobbies and you know.

CM: Yeah, the old garage was there originally. 'Course when we came it wasn't closed in didn't have a door to it.

PM: Right. We made it six feet longer.

CM: Yeah, we made it longer.

PM: That garage, that upper part wasn't there and that lower part wasn't there and the middle part cost us more than the house and twenty-four acres of land. [laughter]

TE: Oh my. May I ask about that picture on the wall in oval frame?

PM: My grandparents on my mother's side.

CM: The Lytles.

PM: They lived right above Food Lion. The house is not there now. He died, I don't remember her, she was dead before I was born. He died when I was three or four years old.

TE: They're a good-looking couple.

JR: Sure are.

PM: Emery Lytle is his name. And uh--

CM: --Matilda?

PM: I believe. He was a Lytle and she was a Harris.

JR: They'd love to scan that too.

PM: I think it was Possum Bob Harris married his sister.

JR: Possum Bob?

PM: I don't know what his name was. They used to call him Possum Bob.

TE: As Judith said, if you're interested in coming to that scanning, that would be a neat picture to have. I watched; there was another scanning earlier this month and people brought in some pretty large things so that should be pretty easy to do.

PM: Gordon Harris was part of the clan.

CM: Yeah. That's…you know, where Harris Road is? Well behind Angelo's where it goes up in there, and you'll see Harris Road goes up and takes a left into the holler. He lived up that way.

JR: Was he a classmate?

PM: Naw, he was older than me. He'd be over a hundred if he was still alive but his daughter lives up there with Helen and Cecil Hawkins.

CM: Best friends of ours.

PM: The school got their water from them, had a reservoir at that time.

CM: Before water came out here. Before we got water from Asheville.

TE: How interesting.

JR: Oh you're on city water?

PM: No we're not.

CM: We have a well.

PM: The school was on that reservoir 'til city water came out here I guess.

JR: It's been really interesting, fascinating. You had interesting lives and lived in a lovely place.

TE: And you get this beauty every day. And there's a squirrel.

PM: Turkeys out there too, the babies are not there though.

JR: Well, the babies are getting pretty big.

PM: Yeah, they 'bout as big as a frying chicken.

CM: Not quite. Yeah you was talking about grocery stores. Back then people grew about everything. I can remember coming up, I can't remember what my age was, but I had to cut the chickens' heads off, clean them and get them ready for Sunday dinner.

JR: Well and you ate squirrel, possum.

CM: Rabbits.

JR: Rabbits, groundhog.

PM: I never did like possum.

CM: I don't reckon I ever cleaned a possum but I cleaned many a rabbit, squirrel, more chickens than anything. My youngest daughter, I never will forget the first time I told her, "You chop their heads off and you throw them out here 'til they quit flopping." And I said "They'll get up and walk around for a while without a head" and she said "Oh, gross!" she said [laughter] She about had a fit.

PM: Somewhere down at her house in all that junk she's got there's one or two of Daddy's, maybe Mother's too, old pay slips from Beacon Manufacturing. Twelve dollars and something a week. You go out to the store, Mother'd give Daddy a list and you'd take it out to the store when they'd have sales was running it and he'd need three or four dollars. That'd last you a week.

JR: Company store huh?

PM: They didn't have any meat which means you had to raise it.

JR: But you had to buy sugar and flour and salt…shortening.

CM: But you grew everything else; corn, beans, taters.

TE: Well and after hog killing time you had lard for a while too.

PM: Yeah. Canned the sausage.

CM: I still can't eat sausage.

JR: It's a lot of work.

TE: Did you scan this already?

JR: I tried and it doesn't fit on the scanner. That is a wonderful picture.

TE: That is a wonderful picture and it's in such good shape.

CM: This is your great--

PM: --I'm not in it. I don't think.

CM: I guess that's while you was in Virginia. '43.

PM: The fifth grade. I guess I was there, just maybe wasn't in school that day. I may be in there I don't know.

JR: Well folks, this has been wonderful. So much fun hearing your stories.

TE: I apologize again for my lateness.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

Transcribed by: Jan Wolff

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